
"Socialism of Science" versus "Socialism of Feelings": Bogdanov and Lunacharsky

Author(s): Georgii D. Gloveli and John Biggart

Source: *Studies in Soviet Thought*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Jul., 1991), pp. 29-55

Published by: [Springer](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20099391>

Accessed: 10/11/2013 15:51

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at

<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Springer is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Studies in Soviet Thought*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

“SOCIALISM OF SCIENCE” VERSUS “SOCIALISM
OF FEELINGS”: BOGDANOV AND LUNACHARSKY

In the USSR at present the discipline of history is undergoing a profound crisis which involves a radical reappraisal of values. A significant milestone in this process was the publication by the journal *Novy Mir* in issue No. 10 for 1988 of letters sent during 1920–1921 to Anatoly Vladimirovich Lunacharsky, by Korolenko, an individual who was once described by the Granat Encyclopedia as having “every right to be considered the conscience of contemporary Russia”.¹ The wisdom, moral strength and nobility of purpose of the writer-democrat gave exceptional force to his condemnation of the excesses of the Bolshevik revolution. “You have advanced the most extreme slogans . . . you have replaced the monastic seminary with your barracks-communism (one thinks of the militarization of labour) . . . the lack of freedom of the press has rendered you deaf and blind to what is happening in real life”. Nowadays, many would agree with Korolenko’s stern condemnation of the “leaders of Russian communism”.²

It is symptomatic, however that in the previous issue of this journal which is the most popular in the Soviet Union and which is considered to be the standard-bearer of the general democratic tendency in social thought there appeared an extraordinarily tendentious and tasteless article by the popular-scientific journalist Alexander Gangnus, ‘On the ruins of positivist aesthetics’. The purpose of this article was the discrediting of the addressee of Korolenko’s letters, Lunacharsky, as, allegedly, one of the principal bearers of the virus of the “infantile disease of leftism” which “was the precondition of the replacement of Marxism and Leninism by what has become known as Stalinism”.³ Lunacharsky was not the only object of vilification. Also accused were Alexander Bogdanov and Maksim Gorky; indeed the philosophies of these three were considered to be identical. The accusation begins with an indictment of “Machism” and “God-building” and concludes with a denunciation of the “normative aesthetics of socialist realism”.

A hatred for the weak, a cult of the strong — was a characteristic

Studies in Soviet Thought 42: 29–55, 1991.

© 1991 Kluwer Academic Publishers. Printed in the Netherlands.

trait of Nietzscheanism, of positivist aesthetics, of Bogdanovism and later of the art of socialist realism".⁴ Citing almost exclusively the *early* works of Lunacharsky, Gangnus accuses the "Leftist — Bogdanovists" of replacing the critical spirit of Marxism by a belief in the command, of voluntarism, and of Jesuitism. In all of this, he alleges, Bogdanov "never in any instance contradicted Lunacharsky".⁵

Alexander Bogdanov is one of the most suppressed and most misrepresented figures in Soviet historiography. No biography of Bogdanov has ever been published in the USSR and it is only recently that a number of relatively objective articles about him have been published. Lunacharsky has been more favourably treated by posterity: purportedly a "faithful Leninist" and "outstanding creator of socialist culture" he has been honoured in an extensive literature, some of it virtually hagiographical.⁶ Moreover, in the course of several decades, the names of Lunacharsky, considered as a "Marxist of the Lenin school" and of Gorky (renowned as a great "Proletarian writer"), and of Gorky, have been artificially segregated from that of the so-called "revisionist" Bogdanov. A. Dementiev, one-time deputy to A. Tvardovsky in the editorship of *Novy Mir* and I. Sats, a former secretary to Lunacharsky once wrote: "In relation to Russian Machism Lunacharsky is of interest only for the manner in which, having come under the influence of this tendency, he fought it and overcame it . . . This philosophy, which was alien to Marxism, exercised immeasurably less influence on his outlook and on that of Gorky than it did on the outlook of Bogdanov." The principal creative achievement of Bogdanov, his universal organizational science⁷ is described by these authors as an "obscure scientific fantasy based on bio-psychology".⁸

The dedicated Stalinist literary critic V. Kirpotin, in his enthusiastic and effusive reminiscences of Lunacharsky and Gorky, wrote in 1986 that "Bogdanov sowed alien seeds in Soviet soil . . . Tektological causality laid the foundations of arbitrariness; world revolution came to be seen as a conflagration which could be ignited throughout the world; the construction of socialism as an assault rather than as a plan."⁹ Crude, un-historical assertions of this kind have enabled the prejudice against Bogdanov which is ingrained in Soviet literature to persist until the present day.

On the other hand, the accelerated de-Stalinization of recent years,

the retreat from Marxism and from the cult of Lenin, and the heated debates over Bukharin and Trotsky have resulted in a re-drawing of the image of Lunacharsky. Now, in common with Lenin's other so-called "comrades-in arms", Kalinin, Sverdlov, Uritsky, Kuibyshev, Ordzhonikidze he is a fallen idol. Now he, too, is linked with the traditional bugbears of Soviet ideology: "Machism", "Proletkultism", "Bogdanovism", and "Nietzscheanism". In the letters of Korolenko published in *Novy Mir*, Lunacharsky figures as a "man of straw". In Gangnus's lampoon he is seen as if in a distorting mirror, as a grotesquely deformed specimen of historical Bolshevism.

The current campaign to blacken Bogdanov and Lunacharsky as "Machists" was begun, however, not by *Novy Mir* but by the organ of Russian nationalism, *Nash Sovremennik*, which six months earlier had published an article by A. Kuzmin in which he had passed the "historical" judgment that: "the propensity towards the administrative approach to things originates with our Machists of the beginning of the century. Usually we associate only Bogdanov and Lunacharsky with this tendency, but Stalin, Kamenev, Rykov and Bukharin were also inclined toward Machism. The essence of 'Machism' is to be found not in any 'complex of feelings' but in the arbitrariness towards life and towards people which derives from these 'complexes'".¹⁰

There is no originality in these pathological misrepresentations of "Machism" by Kuzmin and Gangnus. They do no more than reiterate the crass stupidities of Stalinist historiography. In 1938 the newspaper *Pravda*, replying to questions sent in by readers of the *History of the VKP (b) (Short Course)*, wrote: "The Machists were the Mensheviks Valentinov, Yushkevich, Helfand and the former Bolshevik Bazarov who during the years of reaction went over to Menshevism and who was condemned in 1931 for sabotage. The later leader of the right restorers of capitalism, the enemy of the people and fascist spy, Bukharin, was a Machist and at all times adhered to Machist positions. His Gestapo associates Rykov and Kamenev, whose practice it was in times of strife to defect to the camp of the enemies of the Party, adopted a conciliatory attitude towards Machism."¹¹ The author of this article was A. Shcheglov, a close associate of the notorious Stalinist academician M. Mitin and the author of a vicious pamphlet *Bor'ba Lenina s Bogdanovskoi reviziei Marksizma* (Moscow, 1937) which

became the ultimate source in the Soviet Union for the appraisal of Bogdanov and of the Proletkult.

It is not my intention here to examine in detail the “mythology of Bogdanov” in Soviet literature, whether party-historical or artistic. I wish only to comment on one interesting document which clearly reveals the empty and mendacious nature of not only these early misrepresentations of Bogdanov which are now being revived. This document is a letter which contains a critique of Bolshevik Maximalism and of “barracks-communism” which is every bit as cogent as that contained in the letters of Korolenko. The addressee, again, is Lunacharsky; but the author is the Marxist theoretician, former “Left Bolshevik”, and friend of Lunacharsky, Alexander Bogdanov.

Before examining Bogdanov’s interpretation of the October Revolution, I should like to put forward a psychological explanation of why it was that the political careers of Bogdanov and Lunacharsky, whose socialist aspirations were at the outset so similar, should have developed so differently.

“Human beings are divided and will probably for a long time continue to be divided into two types: the predominantly rationalist type and the predominantly emotional type”, wrote Lunacharsky in the introduction to his book *From Spinoza to Marx*.¹² That this distinction between the two modes of apprehension of reality, the logical, rational-intellectual and the imaginative, direct-emotional has a natural foundation is now widely accepted. In the language of contemporary psychophysiology these are the “left-hemispherical” and “right-hemispherical” types of thinking. This difference between left and right hemispherical thinking is a difference not only in the degree of emotionality, in the predisposition towards abstract thought or artistic activity; often it underlies differing philosophies of life, for example Stoicism or Existentialism, an ascetic dedication to ideas or an active love of life which can easily turn into a passive acceptance of the course of events.¹³

Similar in age, in the breadth of their talents, in their socialist convictions, in their interest in the philosophies of Mach and Avenarius and, later, in their enthusiasm for the idea of proletarian culture, Bogdanov and Lunacharsky were opposites in respect of their mode of apprehending reality. Bogdanov, who described himself as a “rational-wilful” type and who adhered in all of his intellectual enquiries to

Hegel's "strict demand of reason in the world", provides a classic example of left-hemispherical thinking. He has been compared to a stubborn ploughman, ploughing his furrow in a single direction, looking neither to the left nor to the right.¹⁴ He was criticized for "a somewhat excessive systematism and schematism of thought"¹⁵; but no one ever accused him of levity. "Whenever Bogdanov reached a conclusion", Lunacharsky wrote, "it lay in his mind like some heavy, finely carved stone which could not be moved and which no one would be allowed to move."¹⁶

Lunacharsky was quite different and he was even described as "lightminded" in Bolshevik circles.¹⁷ According to Trotsky, "He was frequently distracted from the development of his basic idea by the artistic image. Even in politics his attention would turn to the left and to the right. For Lunacharsky each and every new philosophical and political toy had its attraction and he could not resist playing with them."¹⁸

In the early years of their collaboration in philosophy and politics, Bogdanov and Lunacharsky complemented each other: in their disputes in Vologda with Berdyaev Bogdanov relied on logic and upon scientific erudition, Lunacharsky upon his remarkable powers of oratory.¹⁹ During the formation of the Bolshevik political fraction from 1904—1905 Bogdanov revealed himself as an organizer of exceptional ability, Lunacharsky as an irreplaceable "wandering polemicist" against the Mensheviks. But even at this early state it was apparent that Bogdanov and Lunacharsky possessed diametrically different castes of mind. This can be seen in the anthology *Ocherki realisticheskogo mirovozzreniya* (1904), conceived as the antithesis to *Problemy idealizma*. The critic A. Volzhsky (Glinka) who reviewed this anthology for the Petersburg journal *Zhurnal dlya vsekh* detected in it "an encounter between two tendencies which are in many ways mutually exclusive. One attempts to justify the positivism of scientific-realistic thinking . . . the other has a completely different point of departure, the philosophical poetry of Nietzsche with its cult of a feeling of growing power, with its rapturous deification of life, worship of the beauty, strength and power of the stream of life . . . a devotion which transcends all kinds of rationalism".²⁰ If the first tendency was represented by Bogdanov, the organizer and editor of the anthology, the second was undoubtedly

represented by Lunacharsky, singled out by the reviewer for his “undoubted literary talent and youthful inspiration”.²¹ For Bogdanov, Marxism was a “scientific discovery”, socialism a unique research programme for the construction of society by means of science and planning, on a basis of advanced technology and “conscious comradely principles”. For Lunacharsky, Marxism was bound up with that “primordial interest in the religious and artistic expressions of the heart of man which manifests itself in childhood”;²² and revolution was “a tragically inevitable stage in the evolution of the human soul towards the “Universal Soul” (*Vsedusha*)”, the greatest and most resolute act in the process of Godbuilding, the brightest and most decisive exploit in the programme which has been formally and successfully outlined by Nietzsche — ‘the world has no meaning but we must give it one’”.²³

Bogdanov strove to give the socialist ideal a foundation in the natural sciences, to broaden Marx’s “monist conception of social life and social development” until it became a “monist method embracing all the sciences”. “Scientific monism”, according to Bogdanov, would be achieved through the assimilation of scientific knowledge by the labour movement, through the supplementation of the historical materialism of Marx by energetics and biological evolutionism (Charles Darwin, Ernst Haeckel, Wilhelm Ostwald). Striving towards the creation of a structured and scientific picture of the world as seen “from the point of view of the working class”, Bogdanov turned, on the one hand, to those European philosophers in whose works there was an inseparable link between intellectual activity and the process of labour; on the other hand he attempted to provide a biological foundation for the theory of cognition. The philosophers he turned to were, principally, Ernst Makh and Ludwig Noiré, but he also drew upon Richard Avenarius, George Simmel, Alois Riehl, Théodule Ribot, and Félix le Dantec. He also took an interest in Friederich Nietzsche, the voluntarist philosopher who at one stage of his career was interested in the natural sciences and in positivism. However, another reason for Bogdanov’s interest in Nietzsche (though he devoted far less attention to him than he did to Makh) was Nietzsche’s critique of “metaphysical prejudices”, of the “fetish of scientific and philosophical knowledge” which benumbed and fettered the inquisitiveness of the human mind”.²⁴ “Coercive, authoritarian, categorical ‘norms’ were as repugnant to (Bogdanov) as they had

been to Nietzsche.”²⁵ However the super-individualism of Nietzsche was profoundly alien to the Bogdanov who in 1904 wrote that “in the revolutions of our time the struggle of individualism against the socialist future is increasingly taking precedence over its struggle against the authoritarian past.”²⁶

If Nietzsche was merely an episode in the intellectual career of Bogdanov, Lunacharsky paid the “tribute of delight” to the author of “*The Gay Science*”. Drawn towards poetry rather than towards the natural sciences and attracted by the “emotional and aesthetic side of scientific-socialist ideology”,²⁷ Lunacharsky, “seeking to enlist the vivid ‘social emotions’ of our times”,²⁸ turned towards the super-individualist Nietzsche and to such poets as Maxim Gorky, Emile Verhaeren, Richard Dehmel and Ludwig Scharf. Lunacharsky discovered “something in common” between the spirit of protest of Marxism and Nietzscheanism: “the struggle of an oppressed class for justice, for a life worthy of man, the spirit of resistance, protest and attack welling up out of the very being of this class as it pursues its aims, this is the essence of Marxism; proclamation of the right to full self-determination, a proud defiance of society and of its underlying principles, an emphasis on the right of the individual to self-realisation and enjoyment of life, creativity, this is what attracts us to Nietzsche.”²⁹ Bogdanov never indulged in such comparisons. Attaching supreme importance to the concrete implementation of socialist slogans regarding the abolition of contradictions between mental and physical, creative and reproductive labour, Bogdanov developed his “Empiriomonism” as a “social-labourist understanding of the world”. He considered Marx’s greatest achievement to have been his bridging of the gulf between the spiritual life of man and production, between science and labour. Bogdanov discovered an analogy in the historico-scientific works of Ernst Mach on the development of abstract thinking out of everyday experience, in the theories of Ludwig Noiré on the origins of speech in “labour cries” and in the “proletarian logic” of Joseph Dietzgen. Having devised his labourist conception of society, Bogdanov defined the socialist ideal as follows:

All men are toilers and in the sphere of labour they satisfy the need for creativity which derives from a superabundance of energy. They perfect their techniques and their knowledge and in so doing their own nature.³⁰

When he spoke of the formation of a new “integral” human being, Bogdanov had in mind the all-round development of a worker with a universality of knowledge and skills.

Lunacharsky, as a Marxist, was in no doubt as to the importance of labour and of technique in the life of humanity. But in contradistinction to Bogdanov, he considered that labour directed towards practical aims was insufficient for human progress and he attached particular importance to play, the “gratuitous expenditure of surplus energy”. “Play is the means towards progressive evolution”; and not labour, but “leisure is the mother of all sciences”.³¹ “The common purpose of the union of thought and labour is a complete emancipation from work and the approximation of all labour processes to free creativity.”³²

1908 saw the publication of Bogdanov’s utopian novel *Krasnaya Zvezda*, a graphic representation of socialism as a scientifically organized society. Here the author worked out in detail the idea of the exchange of labour as a socialist alternative to the function of labour power in the production process under market relations. The idea of the exchange of labour had first been put forward by Charles Fourier in whose utopian system labour was turned into pleasure; and Engels had made use of this idea in the model of socialism provided in *Anti-Dühring*.

Society, liberated from the restrictions of capitalist production . . . (generates) a race of producers with an all round development who understand the scientific basis of industrial production as a whole, and each of whom has had practical experience in a whole series of branches of production from start to finish . . .³³

Bogdanov’s *Krasnaya Zvezda* was the starting point of a train of thought which led him to develop his “universal organizational science” and to the programme of proletarian culture, probably the only attempt ever made in the history of international social democracy to elaborate the general-scientific, organizational bases for socialist production in the manner envisaged by Engels. Here, the exchange of labour stood in contradistinction to the kind of labour conscription which one encounters in the socialist systems of writers such as Edward Bellamy and Karl Ballod.³⁴

However the socialism of Engels and Bogdanov remained on the drawing board as a utopian project and the real significance of organi-

zational science, an early version of cybernetics, “a landmark in the history of systems analysis and a model for contemporary science”³⁵ was appreciated only in the 1970s–1980s. During the early decades of the twentieth century orthodox Bolsheviks dismissed Bogdanov’s ideas as “Machism” and as a diversion from the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship, of party authority and of the class struggle.

For the scientific Bogdanov, the necessary precondition of the construction of socialism was the systematization of scientific knowledge from the stand-point of “organization theory”. Lunacharsky, however, had a different conception of socialism. In 1908 he wrote an enthusiastic review of *Krasnaya Zvezda*, but he pointed out that in Bogdanov’s utopia “feelings and colours” were absent.³⁶ This preoccupation with the feelings led Lunacharsky to “place socialism amongst other religious systems”.³⁷ If, for Bogdanov, the socialist ideal belonged entirely to the realm of science, for Lunacharsky science was only part of the “majestic arch of the socialist ideal”. Science, as a system, has nothing to do with feelings of love or hope. Science, as a system, belongs to the mind; religion notes the existence of evil in the world, strives for victory over it, and finds that victory in hope.”³⁸ If for Bogdanov, Marx was a “scientist of a new type”,³⁹ and “the great precursor of organization science”⁴⁰, for Lunacharsky, Marx was “the world’s greatest prophet”.⁴¹

For his proclamation of socialism as “the highest form of religion, in which the great process of the liberation of mankind found expression in the mind, feelings and activities of the individual”,⁴² Lunacharsky was denounced by Lenin and Plekhanov as a “Godbuilder” and as the “Blessed Anatoly”. However, since Lunacharsky had described the philosophy of Bogdanov as “fertile soil for the cultivation of socialist religious consciousness”, Bogdanov, too, came to be associated with “Godbuilding”. But Bogdanov had always argued that the idea of a Deity arose in authoritarian societies and he could not possibly have sympathized with “Godbuilding”. During the meeting of the extended editorial board of *Proletarii* in June 1909 Bogdanov expressed his dismay at the “religious double-talk and contrivances of Lunacharsky, who . . . had committed stupidities in the past and who would go on committing them”.⁴³

After 1909 Bogdanov and Lunacharsky founded their movement for

“proletarian culture” and the difference in their psychic make-up and mode of cognition became apparent in the course of their collaboration within this movement. As J. McLelland has rightly noted: “Whereas Bogdanov viewed proletarian culture primarily as a new system of organizing principles that would help to establish the socio-economic forms of the future, Lunacharsky regarded it mainly as a vehicle which, like his concept of religion, could help to create and marshal an enthusiasm on the part of the masses”.⁴⁴

By the beginning of 1917, after years of intra-party struggle and following a period of service as a doctor during the World War, Bogdanov was no longer a member of the RSDRP but a non-party socialist. It was his conviction that the European proletariat was not yet ready for the role of builder of socialism and the Russian proletariat even less so. Lunacharsky was by this time associated with the Geneva “ideas circle” of the *Vpered* group (formed in December 1909) and he was the author of a number of caustic criticisms, in the journal of the group, of the leadership of the Lenin fraction. For example, in January 1916, Lunacharsky wrote of the “Psychopathological atmosphere” which prevailed in the circle around Lenin: “for these people the idea of a party rich in conflicting opinion and capable of reaching a collective decision after taking into account a diversity of views, is alien. A kind of “Arakcheev” mentality has been instilled in them and uniforms and orders are all that they understand”.⁴⁵ A year later, in February 1917, in his article ‘Amos Fedorovich Lenin — state leader and militarist’, Lunacharsky summed up the “home-spun paradoxes” of Lenin as follows:

We have never before encountered thinking in which the spirit of the solitary craft-worker was more manifest than in the recent outpourings of Lenin. He seems still to have a dim recollection of the models which he learned in the past, but being without any living contact with other party minds and lacking any guidance, he now distorts these Marxist models according to his own limited understanding.⁴⁶

These were fierce attacks, but at a later date Lunacharsky claimed that “After the February Revolution I immediately approached Lenin and Zinoviev, declared that I accepted their point of view without qualification and offered to accept the authority of the Bolshevik Central Committee”.⁴⁷ In another memoir written at this time he explained his transfer of allegiance to the Leninists as follows: “The new upsurge of revolution swept aside all misunderstandings over differences in tactics

and . . . the manifest success of Leninist party-building left us with no option but to admit that we had been the prodigal Bolsheviks who had wandered from the true great path along which our main detachment had been proceeding.”⁴⁸

Writing on the eve of the 10th anniversary of the October Revolution, Lunacharsky doubtless exaggerated the rapidity of his conversion to Leninism. Even so, it is clear that Bogdanov’s response to the revolution was quite different. Firstly, since 1910 his intellectual development had been consistent with the principles he had outlined in his *‘Sotsializm v nastoyashchem’* in 1910. Secondly, he had been psychologically seriously disturbed by the bloodshed of the First World War.⁴⁹ These circumstances rendered Bogdanov immune to the “vivid Maximalist appeal of revolutionary Marxism”⁵⁰ which won over the impressionable Lunacharsky and which was exemplified by Leninism. Working within the cultural-educational department of the Moscow Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies, Bogdanov came out in opposition against the “broad and influential current of Maximalism”.⁵¹ He subjected Lenin’s ‘April Theses’ and ‘Letters on Tactics’ to withering criticism, describing the slogan of “Republic of Soviets” and “commune-state” as a “break with scientific knowledge and scientific method”.⁵² Rejecting the hasty pursuit of socialist revolution and the seizure of power by the proletariat (“the Maximalism of dreams and adventurism”) Bogdanov advocated instead a “cultural programme”, “the engendering of socialism in the present day, the Maximalism of development and of creative work”.⁵³ Where Lenin issued a summons to “turn our revolution into a prelude of the world socialist revolution, a step towards that revolution”⁵⁴, Bogdanov denounced all assumptions that the European proletariat was prepared for revolution as illusory and declared that “the revolution taking place in Russia is a democratic one and it can and must result in the formation of a democratic republic”.⁵⁵ Within the framework of this republic the working class would “mature” in the course of a cultural revolution which would last several decades and would acquire the experience necessary for the “organizational tasks of socialism”. The working class, in its present conditions, not having passed through this essential stage in its organizational and cultural development, was incapable of realising the objectives of socialism.⁵⁶

Bogdanov argued that the attitude of the working class towards the

Provisional Government should be as follows: "The attitude of the working class to the Provisional Government must be determined by how the Provisional Government behaves in relation to the revolution: support is appropriate as long as the government carries out the democratic programme: there should be careful scrutiny and supervision of the implementation of this programme; and firm pressure whenever the government deviates from the democratic programme."⁵⁷

It is illuminating to compare these recommendations of Bogdanov with an article written by Lunacharsky at the same time: "In a revolutionary epoch the prescription is as follows: exert pressure on the government. However, to abjure in advance the assumption of power would be a symptom of a lack of faith in the organizational genius of the proletariat, of a deficiency of revolutionary energy . . . a symptom of that very moderation, bookish restraint and reluctance to move other than by stages . . . which is the hallmark of the right, indeed, opportunist wing of the working class party".⁵⁸

Bogdanov wrote that "the journey from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom is made not by leaps but by laborious steps" and spoke of the gradual conquest of the realm of freedom.⁵⁹ Lunacharsky energetically attacked "bogus Marxist argumentation" and attempts to "translate the pathos and chaos of revolution and the spirit of intense creative activity with which it is imbued into the language of evolution, of processes and laws".⁶⁰

At a Congress held in July 1917, Lunacharsky, together with Trotsky and other members of the Mezhrainka, joined the Leninists in a new coalition of the RSDRP and after the October Revolution Lunacharsky was appointed Commissar for Education in Lenin's government. Shortly after, he wrote a letter to Bogdanov offering him a post in the Commissariat. Bogdanov replied in the letter which we reproduce in full below.

One consequence of the liberation of historical consciousness which has been brought about by the policy of "perestroika" in recent years has been a renewal of interest in the question of "War Communism". Abandoning the prevailing duplicitous interpretation of "War Communism" as a set of measures forced upon the government by civil war and fortunately abandoned with the introduction of NEP, Soviet historians now agree that "War Communism" served as a "source", or

prototype of the Stalinist “administrative system”.⁶¹ The introduction of “War Communism” is now explained as a product of revolutionary romanticism; as the “error of a pioneer, Lenin”, as a consequence of the predisposition towards “barracks socialism” of such theoreticians as Bukharin, Trotsky and Preobrazhensky. In his letter to Lunacharsky Bogdanov provides a summary of the theory of “world economic crisis” and of “war communism” which he had first outlined in 1916. He was to provide a fuller exposition of the theory in the book *Voprosy sotsializma* which we have already mentioned; and later he would develop the idea into a fully fledged theory of “military-economic formations”.⁶² Recently it was for the first time officially acknowledged in Soviet literature that the term “War Communism”, as employed by Lenin in April 1921, had been introduced by Bogdanov “even before October 1917”.⁶³ Contemporary interpretations are now fully in accordance with Bogdanov’s original analysis: “On the one hand, ‘War Communism’ was shaped by the experience of state regulation of the economy during the years 1914–1917; on the other hand, it was a product of utopian expectations of a coming world revolution.”⁶⁴

In his critique of “War Communism” Bogdanov invoked his thesis that for the working class it was “by no means sufficient merely to become stronger than its adversaries and to defeat them in a pitched battle”.⁶⁵ “Socialism will be achieved not by combat alone but also by social construction, by organizational means.”⁶⁶ Whereas Lenin had written that in 1905 the revolutionary movement “had lacked revolutionary Social-Democratic workers in army uniform” and that this “shortcoming” would be eliminated by the World War,⁶⁷ Bogdanov insisted that the workers’ movement had been deformed by war and that Bolshevism had been distorted in its very nature. This deformation of Bolshevism Bogdanov attributed to the enormous influence of the army as an organization and to “military consumers’ communism” as a form of economy. The spread of military organizational forms from the front to the rear and the introduction into the capitalist system of “war communism” created a “kind of mirage in which distorted prototypes of socialism are taken to be its very realization”.⁶⁸ But between Marxist socialism — “the logic of the factory” and “War Communism” — the logic of the barracks, lay an abyss: this was the distance which separated Bogdanov’s programme for the “scientific organization of

labour” from the actually existing “militarization of labour” of Trotsky and from the “extra-economic proletarian coercion” of Bukharin.⁶⁹

Bogdanov had been influenced by the nineteenth-century positivists André de Saint-Simon, Auguste Comte, and Herbert Spenser who had distinguished between military and industrial forms of social organization. Arguably, it was utopian of Bogdanov to believe in the possibility of an industrial society which was not based on commodity relations, in a “socially-organized society”. On the other hand, it was clear to him that socialism must not and could not be based on military forms of social organization. He therefore rejected the model of “War Communism”.

Let us compare some of Bogdanov’s ideas with those of the victorious Bolsheviks. Bogdanov rejected the contention of the Maximalists, Lenin included, that a “planned organization of production” had been achieved by the German bourgeois-Junker state during the war, and that “material preconditions for socialism” had thereby been attained.⁷⁰ On the contrary, he warned that imitation of the external organizational forms of state capitalism would result in the emergence of a “new Arakcheev” who, having seized power would proceed to subordinate the entire economic life of the country to the necessary number of state administrations and would place an official at the head of every enterprise. There would then be a rapid dissipation of productive forces and a collapse of the entire economic system.⁷¹ Significantly, the theoretician of Maximalism, M. Lur’e (Larin), who was criticized by Bogdanov in *Voprosy sotsializma* and who after the October Revolution became a prominent Bolshevik, and chairman of the Economic Policy Department of VSNKh, later openly declared that German state capitalism “served as a model for the early development of the Soviet economic order between 1917 and 1919”.⁷²

Bogdanov described the Maximalist mentality as an “optimism of destruction”.⁷³ This is the kind of optimism which we encounter in a speech delivered by N. K. Krupskaya to the First All-Russian Congress on Extra-Mural Education:

Engels once wrote that even if a world war broke out involving 15 to 20 million troops and resulting in an unprecedented devastation of the European continent, socialism would emerge triumphant. For world war would inflict such damage and destruction that it would undermine the capitalist system and socialism would inevitably follow in

10 or 15 years' time. Now we are living through precisely such a moment, and war has resulted in a ferment of socialism in a number of countries.⁷⁴

Bogdanov's interpretation of the "basic facts of the war" was quite different: "the increasing subordination of the toiling masses leading to their complete enserfment; in the advanced democratic countries, a drift away from a free civil order towards government dictatorship controlled by an oligarchy of the upper strata of society; an upsurge of religiosity, which is to say of the authoritarian outlook and world view amongst the broad social strata amongst whom free and scientific forms of consciousness had been gathering strength."⁷⁵ All of these regressive phenomena, of which the Bolsheviks' introduction of labour conscription was a prime example, were a function of the "imposition of the principles of military organization upon the labouring masses of society".⁷⁶

Bogdanov considered that the "soldier-Bolsheviks" were completely incapable of undertaking the tasks of "broad economic and cultural construction": "The bayonet is not a creative instrument, however widespread its application."⁷⁷

What was the reaction of Bolshevik political leaders to Bogdanov's diagnosis of War Communism? The Chairman of the Proletkult, Lebedev-Polyansky, recalled that when he met Lenin in Smolny in 1918 Lenin enquired after Bogdanov and "angrily complained about his book *Voprosy sotsializma*".⁷⁸ Bukharin wrote a sharply critical review of the book in which he criticized Bogdanov for "opportunistic culture-mongering" ("*opportunisticheskoe kulturnichestvo*").⁷⁹ The militarization of Bolshevism, which Bogdanov considered to be such a negative phenomenon, was for Bukharin a positive development, as he made clear during the IX Party Congress in 1920:

We have so constructed our own party that we have become the most militarized organization ever to have existed; indeed our party is a military organization almost in the literal sense of the term . . . this is the unique glory, the unique strength of our party when compared with the best of the other workers' parties of the world. Our originality derives from the fact that we are a party of discipline which operates along military lines . . .⁸⁰

When, in 1924, Bogdanov added to part IV of the second volume of his *Kurs politicheskoi ekonomii* the section "Military economic for-

mations", the journal *Bolshevik* published a vicious review by N. Petrov in which Bogdanov was accused of "Menshevik insinuations" and of counter-revolutionism for his critical appraisal of War Communism, "which until now we have been accustomed to consider as Marxism put into practice by Lenin".⁸¹

"I shall not change my nature so easily". Bogdanov wrote to Lunacharsky in 1917. This prediction was to be borne out in the years after 1917. Bogdanov turned down an invitation to rejoin the Bolsheviks and take up a leading position in the Party.⁸² He strove to remain true to himself by using the Proletkult as a platform for the dissemination of his ideas on organizational science. Bogdanov's article of 1918, '*Okhudozhestvennom nasledstve*', provides an insight into his attitude towards Party élitism and "leaderism". In it he writes that by studying its religious inheritance, the proletariat can learn how "correctly to interpret manifestations of authoritarianism in present-day society, and to understand the inter-relationship between authoritarianism and social development . . . the role of authoritative party leaders will appear in a new light and the need for collective control over them will become clear."⁸³

After the condemnation of "Bogdanovism" in the Proletkult, Bogdanov acquired the role in Soviet Russia, as he himself put it, of an "official devil" who had to be 'foresworn', who had to be 'blown and spat upon' as in the ritual of Christening and who could be used to frighten unruly infants into obedience in matters of theory".⁸⁴ It was alleged against Bogdanov that as the ideologue of the Proletkult he had "stubbornly advanced the principles of collectivism and of comradesly cooperation at the expense of principles of class struggle . . . during the conflagration of the Civil War he did everything he could to restrain the proletariat from its tasks of militancy and destructions protesting against 'excessive preoccupation with the idea of social struggle', cautioned the proletarian poets against acquiring a 'soldiers' psychology', and campaigned against the use of 'crude and cruel symbolism'."⁸⁵ However, Bogdanov weathered the storm of these critical attacks. He never abandoned his ideas and until the end of his days he displayed the stoicism of a "Red Spinoza".

Lunacharsky did not possess the firmity of purpose of Bogdanov, or his ability to withstand external pressure. Having made his "leap in the

dark" in 1917, Lunacharsky devoted himself with enthusiasm to the task of "revolutionary Marxist education", having come to believe in the superhuman genius of Lenin, the "leader of the world Revolution". After Lenin's death, thanks to his "fortunate gift of easy complaisance", Lunacharsky, according to Trotsky, "quickly came to terms with changes in the personal composition of the leadership, and completely accepted the authority of his new masters."⁸⁶ Applying the "general line of the party" with the greatest enthusiasm, Lunacharsky was drawn into the process of construction of the Stalinist dictatorship. As Bogdanov wrote in his letter to Lunacharsky, "Circumstances are often more powerful than logic". Indeed, disregarding all historical logic, Lunacharsky was eventually to denounce the Proletkult movement which he and Bogdanov had headed as a "harmful Menshevik tendency";⁸⁷ and in 1933, by which time he was already fatally ill, he prepared a final public speech on the official doctrine of "socialist realism" in which he included an expression of "faith in the party and in its leaders".⁸⁸

In fairness to Lunacharsky, however, we should perhaps conclude by recalling what he wrote in his 'Letters from the West' in 1926:

There are experiences and problems which are important for communists which are not part of the essence of communism and which exist on another plane. Hardly any artist can tolerate the confines of even the broadest of systems. If communist criticism cannot learn to value, not only in the work of writers who do not share our views, but also in the work of our own writers, things which lie outside of the boundaries of communism as a system and social movement, then we shall forever witness the abandonment by writers of our cause."⁸⁹

Letter to Lunacharsky, 19 November 1917

Dear Anatoly,

Your letter lay in the Soviet of W. D. for a week and has only now reached me "when the occasion arose". I am replying at once. I wrote to you in July-August but obviously my letter did not reach you.

Needless to say, I am not a supporter of sabotage or boycott. I do not find anything amusing in your behaviour which is frequently absurd though almost always a product of circumstances. I am conscious of the tragic nature of the situation in which you find yourself, but I have the

impression that you, for your part, are far from being fully aware of it. Let me try to explain as best I can:

At the root of everything is the war. It has given rise to two basic circumstances: 1. economic and cultural decline; 2. an enormous growth of war communism.

War communism, which has spread from the front to the rear, has temporarily reconstructed society: the multi-million commune-army; rationing for soldiers' families; the regulation of consumption; and, *as a function of all of this*, the introduction of norms for production and distribution. The entire system of state capitalism is no more than a mongrel form of capitalism and of consumers' war-communism, something which contemporary economists, who have no notion of organizational analysis, fail to understand. The climate of war communism has given rise to *Maximalism*, your own practical variety on the one hand and the academic variety of *Novaya Zhizn'* on the other. Which is to be preferred, I do not know. Yours is openly anti-scientific; theirs is pseudo-scientific. Yours forges ahead regardless, trampling on the toes of Marxism, history, logic, culture — like Sobakevich; theirs indulges in sterile dreams of a social revolution in Europe coming to the aid of our own — like Manilov.⁹⁰

In Russia, Maximalism has developed more fully than in Europe, since our capitalism is weaker than theirs and the influence of war communism as an organizational form is relatively stronger. The socialist workers' party was formerly Bolshevik; but the revolution, in the name of military necessity, has conferred upon this party tasks which have profoundly altered its nature. It has been called upon to organize the pseudo-socialistic masses of peasant soldiers who have been torn from production and are now maintained by the state in barrack-communes. Why this party in particular? No doubt because it was a party of *peace*, the ideal of the soldier masses at the present time.⁹¹ The party became a workers' — soldiers' party. And what does this mean? According to one of the laws of Tektology, if a system consists of parts, one of which is of a higher and the other of a lower level of organization, then their relationship to the environment is determined by the lower level. For example, the strength of a chain is determined by its weakest link; the speed of a squadron of ships by that of the slowest vessel; and so on. The disposition of a political party

which consists of differing class cohorts is determined by its most backward wing. The workers' — soldiers' party is *objectively* only a soldiers' party. What is remarkable is the extent to which Bolshevism has been transformed along these lines. It has assimilated the entire logic, all of the methods, the specific culture and the ideal of the barracks.

The logic of the barracks, by contrast with the logic of the factory consists in the fact that it conceives of every task as an offensive rather than as a matter of organizational experience and work. Defeat the bourgeoisie — that's what socialism is about. Seize power — then we'll be able to manage things. Agreements? — What for? Divide up the spoils? — Not likely! You say there's no alternative? — All right then, let's divide them up. But wait a minute, we've gained the advantage again. Why should we? And so on . . .

Every programmatic and tactical question is decided in precisely the same way. Voting at the age of eighteen: Hold on, they're children! Life is complicated, give them time to learn a bit Nonsense! They can carry a rifle. And anyhow, they're on our side. What is there to argue about? Take the election of front commanders — agitators are appointed as strategists and take charge of the complicated economies of companies and regiments. And yet a conscious worker would hardly insist on the election of engineers . . .

Here is a minor but revealing example. Even if I wished to accept your invitation, I could not do so for material reasons. I would have to devote the entirety of my time and effort to earning a salary "no higher than that of a skilled worker". Would this enable me to support two families at a time when I am publishing the second part of *Tektology* at my own expense and when I have had to have it printed myself given that no publisher wishes to adopt such a commercially absurd, though, I would say, intellectually vital, project?⁹² No worker-socialist would ever insist that an engineer's pay should not exceed his own; the interests of the enterprise dictate otherwise. But in the barracks there are no misgivings about such things, for there is no production to take account of. The barracks understand only the hand-out. Have Lenin and Trotsky never read Marx and don't they know that the value of labour power is defined by the average quantity of needs associated with the carrying out of a given function? Of course they know, but they are consciously breaking with the logic of socialism in the name of the logic of war

communism . . . though it may be that they are doing this unconsciously. And by the way, could you have supported yourself and your family in Switzerland on your salary alone, without your windfall inheritance? You would have had to supplement your income by writing. Much good this would have done your work in a revolutionary ministry . . .

As regards culture and your dealings with other socialist groups: you are continually blowing up bridges, making any kind of discussion and agreement impossible. Your political style has the coarseness of the barracks, your journals publish verse on dragging out the intestines of the bourgeoisie . . .⁹³

Consider the state of comradely relations . . . The day after you had cried out "I cannot bear this!", one of your closest comrades, Emelyan Yaroslavsky published in *Sotsial-Demokrat* an article on "hysterical intellectuals who feel sorry for buildings and have no pity for people, who wring their smooth and noble hands and wail 'I cannot bear it!'", and so on (this is a rough quotation, but I have not distorted the style).⁹⁴ So much for comradely relations. Is this a proletarian speaking? No, this is a vulgar soldier who will embrace his comrade in the barracks while they are drinking methylated spirits but curse him and bayonet him in the stomach at the slightest provocation. I could not live and work in this kind of atmosphere. For me, comradely relations are fundamental to the new culture. You will remember that it was in order to uphold this principle in dealings with distant Caucasian tribesmen who had earned the right to be treated as comrades as soon as they entered into my life as a revolutionary that I broke with almost all of those who stood close to me, with the *Vpered* group.⁹⁵ I shall not change my nature so easily. There is no blame to be attached here. All of this was inevitable. Your uncontrolled demagogy is a necessary adaptation to the task of gathering together the masses of the soldiery. The cultural degeneration which you have undergone is the unavoidable consequence of your dealings with the soldiery at a time when the proletariat is culturally weak. The dark years of reaction have brutalized the proletariat, have clouded its consciousness. Only two years ago the workers of Moscow — Moscow, and even Presnya! — enthusiastically took part in a Black Hundreds pogrom against the Germans . . .⁹⁶ The economic life of the workers has been distorted and falsified:

three-quarters of their income now comes from the state, all of their pay-rises come out of the state budget. Not a single economist will deny this.

And the socialist ideal? It is clear that anyone who considers that a soldiers' uprising marks its beginning is mistaken in considering himself a socialist, has objectively broken with socialism. Such a person may proceed along the path of war communism, deluding himself that this caricature, this crisis of disintegration, is his ideal of life and beauty. Such a person may serve the objectively necessary purposes of present-day Bolshevism but he is politically and intellectually doomed. He has placed his faith in the soldier's bayonet and the day is not far off when these bayonets will rip his faith asunder and probably his body too. This is where the tragedy resides.

It means nothing to me that this soldiers' socialism is being implemented by a crude chess player like Lenin, or by a conceited actor like Trotsky. What saddens me is that someone like you should have become involved in this affair; firstly because your disenchantment will be much greater than theirs; and secondly because you could have achieved something different, something less conspicuous at the present moment but no less important and more lasting. You could have achieved this without betraying yourself. For my part, I shall continue with this other task though it is exhausting to be the only one who sees when all around are blind.

There is no longer any question of a socialist revolution in Europe; its working class has not attained the necessary level of culture and organization; the history of the war bears witness to its immaturity.⁹⁷ In Europe we can expect to see a number of revolutions of a liquidationary character, in the sense that they will eliminate the consequences of the war: the authoritarianism (oligarchy, government dictatorship); debt (and so, hypertrophy of the rentier system); any residual oppression of the nationalities; the renewed isolation of the nations from each other as brought about by the war and consolidated by state capitalism; and so forth. There is plenty of work to be done.

In Russia, the soldiers' — communist revolution, far from bringing us closer to the socialist revolution, is the very negation of socialism. The demagogic military dictatorship is inherently unstable: you can't "sit on

your bayonets". The workers' — peasants' party is bound to disintegrate and is unlikely to do so peacefully. Then a new workers' party — or whatever survives the soldiers' bullets and bayonets — will stand in need of its own ideology and of its own ideologues (the former ones, if they survive, will have been ruined by their experience of demagoguery and dictatorship). I shall be working towards this future.

It is time that proletarian culture ceased being a subject for discussion, a slogan without content. The time has come to clarify its principles, define its criteria, and work out its logic so that we shall in future be able to say: this is proletarian culture, without a doubt, and that is not.

This is my task. I shall adhere to it to the end.

I have sent you some pamphlets. I hope that you have received them (via *Zhizn'*). I am sending you the second part of *Tektologiya* and *Voprosy sotsializma* which have still not been printed after three months. It would give me great pleasure if you returned to the cause of workers' socialism. I am afraid that it may already be too late. Circumstances are often more powerful than logic.

Greetings,

Your Alexander.

NOTES

¹ I. Ignatov, 'Korolenko', *Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar' "Granat"*, XXV, column, 239 (Moscow, 1914)

² *Novy Mir* (1988), No. 10, pp. 207, 215, *passim*.

³ A. Gangnus, 'Na ruinaх pozitivnoi estetiki', *Novy Mir* (1988), No. 9, p. 147.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 151.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 159.

⁶ See Sheila Fitzpartrick, 'A. V. Lunacharskii: Recent Soviet Interpretations and Republications', *Soviet Studies* (1967), No. 3, pp. 267–289; and 'Lunacharskii', *Soviet Studies* (1969), No. 4, pp. 527–535. A Lunacharsky bibliography lists 4,008 works by Lunacharsky, 745 letters and 1,690 secondary works. See *A. V. Lunacharskii: Ukazatel' trudov, pisem i literatury o zhizni i deyatel'nosti* (2 vols., M., 1975–1979).

⁷ See G. Gorelik, 'Bogdanov's Tektology: its nature, development and influence',

Studies in Soviet Thought 26 (1983); and M. Bello, 'Success of the system approach: Bogdanov and Von Bertalanffy', *Studies in Soviet Thought* 30 (1985).

⁸ *Istoriya Russkoi Sovetskoi literatury*, Vol. I (Moscow, 1966), p. 159.

⁹ V. Kirpotin, *Nachalo* (Moscow, 1986), pp. 34–35.

¹⁰ A. Kuz'min, 'K kakomu khramy my ishchem dorogu?', *Nash Sovremennik* (1988), No. 3, p. 157.

¹¹ 'Chto-takoe Makhizm, Empiriokrititsizm?', *Pravda*, 24 December 1938.

¹² A. Lunacharsky, *Ot Spinozy do Marksa* (Moscow, 1925), p. 3.

¹³ On "Left-right" hemispherical thinking, see Paul Bakan, 'The eyes have it', *Psychology Today* (1971), No. 4, pp. 64–69; Carl Sagan, *The Dragons of Eden* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1977), ch. VII; Robert Ornstein, 'The split and whole brain', *Human Nature* (1978), No. 1, pp. 76–83; Sally Springer and Georg Deutsch, *Left Brain, Right Brain* (San Francisco, W. H. Freeman & Co., 1981), chs. 6 and 10. Here I have made use of Sergei Maslov, 'Assimetriya poznavatel'nykh mekhanizmov i ego sledstviya', *Semiotika i informatika* (Moscow, 1983); and Vitalii Rotenberg, 'Deyanie i dukh', *Znanie — Sila* (Moscow, 1988), No. 9, pp. 74–78.

¹⁴ Ivan Ermolaev, 'Moi vospominaniya', *Sever* (Vologda, 1923), No. 3–4, p. 5.

¹⁵ P. Yushkevich, *Stolpy filosofskoi ortodoksii* (St. Petersburg, 1910), p. 77.

¹⁶ A. Lunacharsky, 'Alexander Alexandrovich Bogdanov', *Pravda*, 10 April 1928.

¹⁷ Gorky, Alexander Blok and Nikolai Berdyaev also commented on Lunacharsky's lack of seriousness. See A. Blok, 'Dnevnik', in A. Blok, *Sobranie sochinenii*. Vol. 7 (Moscow-Leningrad, 1963), p. 322; N. Berdyaev, *Samopoznanie* (Moscow, 1990), p. 113; A. M. Gor'kii, Letter of 30 November 1926 to Ya. S. Ganetskii, *Izvestiya TSK KPSS* (1990), No. 7, p. 212.

¹⁸ L. Trotsky, *Portrety revolyutsionerov*, compiled by Y. Felshtinsky (Chalidze Publications, Benson, Vermont, 1988), p. 164.

¹⁹ See J. Biggart, 'Bogdanov and Lunacharsky in Vologda', in: *Sbornik* (Newsletter of the Study Group on the Russian Revolution), No. 5 (Leeds, 1980), pp. 28–39.

²⁰ *Zhurnal dlya vsekh* (St. Petersburg, 1904), No. 4, p. 235.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

²² A. Lunacharsky, *Religiya i sotsializm*, Vol. I (St. Petersburg, 1908), p. 9.

²³ A. Lunacharsky, *Velikii perevorot* (Petrograd, 1919), p. 31.

²⁴ A. Bogdanov, 'Chego iskat' Russkomu chitatelyu u Ernsta Makha?', in: E. Makh, *Analiz oshchushchenii* (Moscow, 1908), p. 9.

²⁵ R. Stites, 'R. Stites, 'Fantasy and revolution', preface to: A. Bogdanov, *Red Star* (Bloomington, 1984), p. 8.

²⁶ A. Bogdanov, *Novy Mir* (Moscow, 1905), p. 29.

²⁷ A. Lunacharsky, *Vospominaniya i vpechatleniya* (Moscow, 1968), p. 22.

²⁸ A. Lunacharsky, *Ot Spinozy do Marksa*, p. 130.

²⁹ A. Lunacharsky, *Sobranie sochinenii*, Vol. I (Moscow, 1969), p. 289.

³⁰ A. Bogdanov, *Kratkii kurs ekonomicheskoi nauki* (9th edition, Moscow, 1906), p. 285.

³¹ A. Lunacharsky, 'Osnovy pozitivnoi estetiki', in: *Sobranie Sochinenii*, Vol. 7 (Moscow, 1967), p. 45.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 46.

³³ F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring* (1878), translated from the 3rd German edition (1894) by Emile Burns (Moscow, 1977), pp. 360–361.

³⁴ Edward Bellamy's utopian novel, *Looking Backward 2000—1887* (Boston, 1888) was popular in Russian socialist circles and on the first May Day meeting ('*Mayovka*') held in Russia in St. Petersburg in 1891 the famous worker-revolutionary Fedor Afanasiev called upon his listeners to acquaint themselves with the ideals of socialism as outlined in Bellamy's book in which production is organised on the basis of a 24-year labour conscription of every citizen. The novel was translated into Russian five times between 1889 and 1917. According to Karl Ballod (pseudonym 'Atlanticus') precise statistics and five years' industrial labour service by all citizens would be sufficient for the socialist reconstruction of the German national economy. From 1914–1919 Ballod was an adviser to the German War Ministry and devised the German system of food rationing. See *Der Zukunftsstaat. Produktion und Konsum im Sozialstaat, mit einer Vorrede von Karl Kautsky* (Stuttgart, 1898). In Lenin's opinion, Ballod in his novel "devised a scientific plan for the socialist transformation of the entire national economy of Germany". (See, V. I. Lenin, *PSS*, Vol. 42, p. 342.)

³⁵ K. Perekhuda, 'Rekonstrukcij tektologicznej teorii organizacii A. Bogdanowa', *Praksologia* (Warsaw, 1984), No. 91–92, p. 105.

³⁶ A. Lunacharsky, review of A. Bogdanov, *Krasnaya Zvezda, Obrazovanie* (St. Petersburg, 1908), No. 5, p. 119–120.

³⁷ A. Lunacharsky, *Religiya i sotsializm*, vol. I, p. 8.

³⁸ Ibidem, p. 43. On Lunacharsky, see J. C. McClelland, 'Utopianism versus revolutionary heroism in Bolshevik policy: the proletarian culture debate', *Slavic Review* (1980), vol. 39, No. 3, p. 413; and G. L. Kline, *Religious and Anti-Religious Thought in Russia* (Chicago and London, 1968), p. 119.

³⁹ A. Bogdanov, *Novy Mir*, p. 30.

⁴⁰ A. Bogdanov, *Vseobschchaya organizatsionnaya nauka: Tektologiya* (3rd edition, Vol. I, Leningrad-Moscow, 1925), p. 118.

⁴¹ A. Lunacharsky, *Religiya i sotsializm*, vol. I, p. 72.

⁴² Ibidem, p. 36.

⁴³ *Protokoly rasshirennoi redaktsii "Proletariya"* (Moscow, Partizdat, 1934), pp. 42–43, 45.

⁴⁴ J. C. McClelland, op. cit., p. 414.

⁴⁵ A. Voinov (Lunacharsky), 'Ob"edinenie i raskol', *Vpered* (Geneva), No. 3 (1916), 21 September, p. 5.

⁴⁶ A. Lunacharsky, 'Amos Fedorovich Lenin — gosudarstvennik i militarist', *Vpered* (Geneva), No. 6, 1 February 1917. Lunacharsky's title alludes to Amos Fedorovich Lyapkin-Tyapkin, the comic character in Gogol's *The Government Inspector*. In Russian "*tyap-tyap*" means "anyhow".

⁴⁷ A. Lunacharsky, 'Autobiography', in *Deyateli SSSR i Otkryabr'skoi Revolyutsii*, I (Moscow, 1929), column 345, re-printed in *Deyateli SSSR i revolyutsionnogo dvizheniya Rossii* (Moscow, 1989), p. 519. The entries for this compilation were written between 1925 and 1926. In reality, Lunacharsky, upon returning to Russia in May 1917 joined not the Lenin group but the 'Mezhraionka'. In this autobiography he claims, however, that he and Trotsky remained in the Mezhraionka on the instruction of Lenin's Central Committee, in order to bring as many of its members as possible over to the Leninists.

⁴⁸ *Proletarskaya Revolyutsiya* (1926), No. 3, p. 114.

⁴⁹ This episode in Bogdanov's life has recently been described by the Soviet historian

V. Novoselov as follows: "The forty year old captain Bogdanov had taken part in the tragic offensive of the Russian army in East Prussia. He had served as a regimental doctor. For his daring and fearless conduct in leading a convoy of wounded to safety while under fire he had been recommended for a decoration. But the senseless carnage and the suffering which he witnessed overwhelmed him. Gorky, to whom Bogdanov related his impressions of the campaign, later incorporated the material in his novel *The Life of Klim Samgin*." Novoselov also cites the reminiscences of Bogdanov's son, the biologist A. A. Malinovskiy: "I remember well the year 1915 when my father returned from the war. What had happened to his beguiling smile? When we met my father would look at me as if he did not know me. He was the same person and yet he had changed. I had never known him to be like this. Only years later did I understand what had happened to my father in 1915." See V. Novoselov, 'Opal'nye fotografii', *Krasny Sever* (Vologda), 12 August 1990.

⁵⁰ A. Lunacharsky, *Velikii Perevorot*, p. 31.

⁵¹ A. Bogdanov, 'Programma kul'tury', in his *Voprosy sotsializma* (Moscow, 1918), p. 74.

⁵² A. Bogdanov, 'Gosudarstvo-kommuna', *Izvestiya Moskovskogo Soveta Rabochikh Deputatov* 27 June 1917.

⁵³ A. Bogdanov, 'Programma kul'tury', p. 74.

⁵⁴ V. Lenin, 'Proshchal'noe pis'mo k Shveitsarskim rabochim', *PSS*, T. 31 (Moscow, 1962), p. 92. This letter was written in mid-March 1917.

⁵⁵ A. Bogdanov, *Zadachi rabochikh v revolyutsii* (Moscow, 1917), p. 17.

⁵⁶ A. Bogdanov, 'Programma kul'tury', p. 74.

⁵⁷ A. Bogdanov, *Zadachi rabochikh v revolyutsii* (Moscow, 1917), p. 21.

⁵⁸ A. Lunacharsky, 'Rassloenie sotsial-demokratii', *Letopis'* (1917), No. 5/6, 357.

⁵⁹ A. Bogdanov, 'Programma kul'tury', p. 74.

⁶⁰ A. Lunacharsky, 'Rassloenie sotsial-demokratii', p. 357.

⁶¹ See, for example, M. Gefter, 'Stalin umer vchera . . .', in: *Inogo ne dano* (Moscow, 1988), p. 311; P. Klyamkin, 'Pochemu trudno govorit' pravdu', *Novy Mir* (1989), No. 2, pp. 219–230; and 'Kul'minatsiya "Voennogo Kommunizma"', in: *Ekonomika i organizatsiya promyshlennogo proizvodstva* (Novosibirsk, 1989), No. 1, p. 175.

⁶² See John Biggart, 'Alexander Bogdanov and the theory of a "New Class"', *The Russian Review* (1990), Vol. 49, No. 3.

⁶³ V. P. Buldakov & V. V. Kabanov, 'Voennyi kommunizm: ideologiya i obshchestvennoe razvitiye', *Voprosy Istorii* (1990), No. 3, p. 41.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁵ A. Bogdanov, *Put' k sotsializmu* (Moscow, 1917), p. 12.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁷ V. I. Lenin, 'Doklad o revolyutsii 1905 goda', *PSS*, T. 30 (Moscow, 1962), p. 319. This speech was delivered by Lenin on 9 (22) January 1917 in Zurich to an audience of young Swiss workers.

⁶⁸ A. Bogdanov, *Put' k sotsializmu*, p. 90.

⁶⁹ See L. Trotsky, 'O mobilizatsii industrial'nogo proletariata . . . Tezisy TsK RKP (1920)', in: L. Trotsky, *K istorii russkoi revolyutsii* (Moscow, 1990), p. 157; N. Bukharin, *Ekonomika perekhodnogo perioda* (1920), chapter X.

⁷⁰ "The extent to which present day society has matured for the transition to socialism has been demonstrated by this war, in which the exertion of national life called for the

direction of the economic life of over fifty million people from a *single centre*". See Lenin, 'Povorot v mirovoi politike', *Sotsial-Demokrat*, No. 58 (31 January 1917), in *PSS*, T. 30 (Moscow, 1962), p. 347; and "Our task is to study the state capitalism of the Germans, to spare *no effort* in copying it and not shrink from adopting *dictatorial* methods to hasten the copying of it . . . we must not hesitate to use barbarous methods in countering barbarism" 'O "levom" rebyachestve i o melkom burzhuanosti', *Pravda*, 9, 10, 11 May 1918, in *PSS*, T. 36 (Moscow, 1962), p. 301. [emphasis in the original].

⁷¹ A. Bogdanov, *Put' k sotsializmu*, p. 40.

⁷² Yu. Larin, *Gosudarstvenny kapitalizm voennogo vremeni v Germanii* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1928), pp. 5–6.

⁷³ A. Bogdanov, *Voprosy sotsializma*, p. 99.

⁷⁴ N. K. Krupskaya, 'Tekushchii moment i vneshkol'noe obrazovanie', *Vneshkol'noe Obrazovanie* (1919), No. 4/6, p. 41.

⁷⁵ A. Bogdanov, *Put' k sotsializmu*, p. 76.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 79.

⁷⁷ A. Bogdanov, 'Sud'by rabochei partii v nyneshnei revolyutsii', *Novaya Zhizn*, 27 January/9 February 1918.

⁷⁸ See *Zhivoi Lenin* (Moscow, 1965), p. 143.

⁷⁹ *Kommunist* (MK RSDRP [b], 1918), No. 3, p. 19.

⁸⁰ *IX S"ezd RKP(b). Protokoly* (Moscow, 1960), p. 225.

⁸¹ N. Petrov, 'S "ispravlenym" Marksom protiv kommunizma', *Bol'shevik* (1924), No. 5–6, p. 90.

⁸² See S. Krivtsov, 'Pamyati A. A. Bogdanova', *Pod Znamenem Marksizma* (1928), No. 4, p. 185.

⁸³ *Proletarskaya Kul'tura* (1918), No. 2, p. 8.

⁸⁴ A. Bogdanov, *Vseobshchaya Organizatsionnaya Nauka: Tektologiya*, T. III (Leningrad-Moscow, 1929), p. 206.

⁸⁵ G. Lelevich, 'Bogdanov', in: *Literaturnaya Entsiklopediya* (Moscow, 1929), T. I. Column 529.

⁸⁶ L. Trotsky, *Portrety revolyutsionerov*, p. 41.

⁸⁷ A. Lunacharsky, *Sobranie Sochinenii*. Vol. 7 (M., 1967), p. 658.

⁸⁸ A. Lunacharsky, *Sobranie Sochinenii*, Vol. 8 (M., 1967), p. 501.

⁸⁹ A. Lunacharsky, *Sobranie Sochinenii*, Vol. 4 (M., 1964), p. 403.

⁹⁰ Manilov and Sobakevich are satirical characters in Gogol's epic poem *Dead Souls*. Manilov is a sickeningly sentimental landowner given to hare-brained scheming; Sobakevich is an ignorant, coarse and brutal landowner.

⁹¹ "The turbulent crowds of the popular masses, reduced to penury, worn out, backward, and in whom the last vestige of patriotism had been eradicated by their complete estrangement from public life and government, rushed to give their support to demagogues of an internationalist persuasion; and it was for this reason that the anti-war tendency, which was also the tendency which opposed the bourgeoisie and capitalism in general, was bound to prevail, as indeed it did prevail." N. Bekhterev, *Kollektivnaya refleksologiya* (Petrograd, 1921), p. 406.

⁹² Bogdanov was married to Natalya B. Korsak-Malinovsky (1865–1945). His second family at this time comprised his son by Anfusa I. Smirnova (1873–1914), Alexander, and Lidiya P. Pavlova (1881–1952) who cared for Alexander after his mother's death. The second part of *Tektology* was published in Moscow in 1917 at the author's expense.

⁹³ In his article 'Kritika proletarskogo iskusstva', Bogdanov later criticised "the 'specifically soldierly' motifs in proletarian poetry . . . which distorted this great class's conception of struggle . . . and which included malicious mockery of defeated enemies, praise of lynch-law, and even sadistic exultations on the theme of dragging out the intestines of the bourgeoisie. Sadly, even this was to be found." See *Proletarskaya Kul'tura* (1918), No. 3, p. 15.

⁹⁴ On 3/16 November 1917 *Novaya Zhizn'* reported that Lunacharsky had sent a letter of resignation to Sovnarkom protesting that he found unbearable the reported deaths of thousands and the destruction of the Cathedrals of St. Basil and of the Assumption by Bolshevik artillery shelling. When it transpired that these reports were exaggerated Lunacharsky withdrew his resignation. Yaroslavsky's article, 'Zhaleete kamni, a ne zhaleete lyudei' was published in *Sotsial-Demokrat*, the organ of the Moscow Committee of the RSDRP on 7/20 November 1917.

⁹⁵ Bogdanov is referring to a Tiflis group of Bolsheviks, one of whose members, the Georgian worker Maliton Filiya, had been a pupil of the Bologna Party School.

⁹⁶ On 27–28 May 1915 a major anti-German pogrom had taken place in Moscow as a result of which the City Duma had instigated an enquiry into "criminal acts taking the form of murder, arson, robbery and violence". 475 industrial-commercial enterprises were affected by these attacks and losses were evaluated at 38.5 million roubles. The victims included 113 German and Austrian citizens, 489 Russians with foreign surnames and 90 persons with Russian surnames. See *Zhurnal Moskovskoi Gorodskoi Dumy* (1915), No. 13, column 2. Gorky commented on the "bloody animal-like" anti-German pogrom in his 'Nesvoevremennye Mysly' in *Novaya Zhizn'*, 9/22 May 1917.

⁹⁷ After the November Revolution in Germany in 1918 Bogdanov rejected Yu. Martov's view of this revolution as socialist, arguing instead that it was "typically liquidationist". See S. Krivtsov, 'Pamyati A. A. Bogdanova . . . p. 185.

*Institute of Economics,
USSR Academy of Sciences
Moscow
USSR*

(Translated from Russian by John Biggart)